Speech from the Throne

by

The Honourable Lloyd G. MacPhail
Lieutenant Governor

at the Opening of the

Third Session

of the

Fifty-Seventh General Assembly

of the Province of

Prince Edward Island

on

February 22th, 1988

at 2:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is my privilege, in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to welcome you to the Third Session of the Fifty-seventh General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I am pleased to offer my congratulations to the new Member from Prince Fifth on her election to this Assembly.

A highlight of this past year was, without doubt, the state visit to Prince Edward Island of His Royal Highness The Prince Edward.

My Government made a determined effort to involve all segments of our population in His Royal Highness' visit and to ensure that his itinerary took him into the agricultural, fishing and recreational areas of the Province.

Her Honour and I were delighted to act as hosts for the Royal Party at our official residence. The efforts of the Government House Committee and various departments of government ensured that the residence was both comfortable and tastefully furnished for His Royal Highness and his staff.

I wish to join my Government in extending congratulations and best wishes to the Provincial Exhibition Association on its 100th anniversary.

Islanders of my generation will have fond memories of The Exhibition in the days before it became known as Old Home Week. Held later in the summer than has been the custom in recent years, The Exhibition placed greater emphasis on the showing of vegetables, forage, fruits and livestock, and much less emphasis on race cards.

Like other young Islanders, I would spend the better part of the summer vacation trying to save sufficient pocket money to ensure a memorable day - most often a Wednesday - at the Exhibition grounds. The day itself would involve arriving at mid-morning, viewing the many exhibits in the old Exhibition Building, taking in the marvels of the midway and then, in the afternoon, viewing the combined race card and vaudeville acts.

Unlike the present Old Home Week, the vaudeville acts were then held between dashes, in front of the grandstand. The grandstand and bleachers were much larger than they are today, and the crowd was an interesting mix of harness racing enthusiasts and those mainly interested in the vaudeville show.

Over the years, the directors of the Provincial Exhibition Association have devoted much time and effort to this annual showcase, and they deserve our sincere thanks for their efforts.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Since we last gathered in this historic building, a number of significant regional, national and international events have come to pass; events which have the potential of bringing about dramatic change in our country and in our Province. It is fair to suggest that there have been few periods in the history of Prince Edward Island when we have been faced with so many crucial decisions.

My Government has been an active participant in these decisions, on behalf of all Prince Edward Islanders. On the national scene, my Government has represented Prince Edward Island with determination, with thoughtfulness, and always with the best interests of our Province as the primary consideration.

Decisions concerning Free Trade with the United States of America, changes to our Constitution through the Meech Lake Accord, and a permanent link to the mainland, will have significant impact on the social and economic life of our people. My Government will continue to pursue, monitor, and respond to these vital issues in a manner which is in the best interests of the people of Prince Edward Island.

While giving fair consideration to regional, national and international concerns, my Government has been careful not to neglect the very real social and economic issues here at home. Addressing these issues has led to decisions affecting the potato industry, to the introduction of legislation providing for pay equity in the public service, to the establishment of a seat belt law, to a response to the Supreme Court decision on the question of abortion, and to the introduction of Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

None of these kinds of issues can be addressed without considerable debate and the clash of differing opinions. None of these issues, however, can be left unaddressed. My Government will continue to consult, to invite debate, and to provide all Islanders with an opportunity to participate in major decisions.

New programs and new initiatives must endeavour to strike a balance between the goal of economic growth and development and that of social improvement. Society demands that the two progress at an even pace. The programs and initiatives I am about to outline to you have been planned and developed with that delicate balance in mind.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government will continue to offer strong support to the agriculture industry in Prince Edward Island.

Last year, the gross value of sales from agricultural products exceeded 200 million dollars. Approximately one-half of employment and value-added production in the manufacturing sector is derived from the processing of agricultural products, while more than 10 percent of employed Islanders work directly in the agriculture industry. Consequently, the development of our agriculture industry is, and will continue to be, a priority of my Government.

The importance of the potato industry to all Islanders was clearly illustrated in the report of the Royal Commission on the Prince Edward Island Potato Industry. The Driscoll Report has been completed since our last session and the implementation of its recommendations has already begun.

In support of the industry, my Government will introduce a Potato Industry Development Program. This program will provide assistance in the areas of quality storage, applied research, management assistance, and promotion and marketing. As well, the program will provide financial aid to assist the Elite Seed Farm in its vital work of maintaining high quality, disease free seed for the Prince Edward Island Potato Industry.

In the continuing effort to support the development of the horse industry, assistance will be provided to encourage the respective breed associations to identify and reward the breeders of outstanding animals. Breeder awards will extend to quarter horses, hunters and draft horses, as well as to the standardbreds upon which our reputation as the Kentucky of Canada has been built.

My Government believes that the beef industry in this Province holds significant promise for future development. Therefore, assistance will be provided to encourage both expansion and improved productivity in this sector of the agriculture industry.

To assist hog producers with their cash flow requirements, the Hog Stabilization Program will now be utilizing monthly payments instead of quarterly payments.

As part of the effort to encourage the development of livestock commodities, a feasibility study relating to frozen embryo transfer technology will be undertaken. This study will examine the requirements to enhance the local application of this technology, and investigate market opportunities for quality genetic stock from this Province.

To enhance the production technology available to Island fur ranchers, a Fur Industry Development Program will be introduced. Through this quality improvement program, assistance will be given to increase the use of artificial insemination on fox ranches. The program will also provide for nutrition counselling and the purchase of equipment for use by the Prince Edward Island Feed Analysis Laboratory.

In addition, a Fur Industry Feed Station will be established in western Prince Edward Island. This initiative will provide a system for quality feed preparation and distribution to ranchers across the Province at a potentially reduced cost.

The agriculture industry must continually adjust to changes in markets, production technology, and management techniques. To assist this vital industry in meeting the challenges facing it, my Minister of Agriculture has placed an increased emphasis on the organization of markets, the production of quality produce, and the development of new opportunities presented by biotechnology. My Government has appointed a Director of Appropriate Technology and International Programs to assist the industry in adjusting to changes in export marketing demands and identifying new value-added opportunities for agricultural commodities.

The conservation of land and water and the maintenance of a clean environment are becoming increasingly important objectives in our society. As well, Island farmers are looking for ways to reduce input costs, make better use of on-farm resources, and improve the condition of the soil. To assist the agricultural community in achieving these objectives, a Sustainable Agriculture Development Program will be designed and introduced.

It is estimated that crop losses to insects and diseases, together with the cost of chemicals and their application, total over 40 million dollars annually in Prince Edward Island. To reduce these very significant costs, my Government will initiate a comprehensive approach to the identification, prevention and control of plant diseases and insects. The information provided through the new Integrated Pest Management Program, combined with appropriate treatment and prevention practices, has the potential of decreasing the use of pesticides and fertilizers and thereby increasing net farm income.

Over the past year, my Government has devoted much time and effort to farm financing and credit issues. As a result, several steps have been taken to assist farmers caught in a financial squeeze. The use of equity financing has been adopted as one significant solution to this problem. The new Lease-back to Vendor Program serves as only one example of equity financing.

Even more help is needed, however. We must attract new entrants into the industry and we must reduce the heavy reliance on debt financing. In order to address these critical issues, my Minister of Agriculture is examining a number of new intitiatives.

Efforts to gain better access to worldwide sources of information for our farm families will be enhanced by the greater use of computer technology. Accordingly, a new computer networking system will be installed within the Department of Agriculture for this purpose.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Tourist visitations to Prince Edward Island this past year reached an all-time high. More than 700,000 people from all over the world accepted our invitation to experience "One of the World's Great Islands".

There is every reason to believe that tourist visitations will continue to grow. It is essential, therefore, to plan carefully for the future development of the tourism industry.

My Government is committed to the measured development of the industry in a manner which preserves the cultural and environmental integrity of our Island Province.

To this end, my Government, in conjunction with the Tourism Industry Association, will undertake the preparation of a detailed Statement of Principles upon which all participants in the industry can rely for guidance in future development.

The Statement of Principles will serve as a strong foundation upon which a comprehensive Prince Edward Island Tourism Development Strategy can be based.

Over the next year, my Minister of Tourism and Parks, along with representatives from the Tourism Industry Association, will be seeking the participation of the people of Prince Edward Island in developing both a statement of principles and a development strategy for presentation in the next session of the Legislative Assembly.

In keeping with a tourism development philosophy which is sensitive to our physical and cultural environment, several new initiatives have been identified. My Government will be joining with the federal and municipal governments to develop heritage and cultural tourism products and services which celebrate this Province's legacy as the Birthplace of Canada.

My Minister of Tourism and Parks has recently announced the launching of Touch Nature '88, a campaign designed to draw visitors' attention to the abundant flora, fauna and wildlife which our beautiful Province has to offer.

Planning has also been underway for a number of major events which accentuate Prince Edward Island's natural advantages as a vacation destination. Our Province has been selected as a new stop on the Canadian Professional Golf Association's annual tour, and a professional golf tournament will be held here during the shoulder season.

Consistent with the Touch Nature theme, additional resources have been committed to revitalize our provincial park system which has, in the past, been cut adrift from tourism planning.

In this session of the Legislative Assembly, my Minister of Tourism and Parks will expand the program for maintenance upgrading of our provincial parks. My Minister will announce the creation of additional staff positions for recreation and education programs as well as for park security.

As well, improvements will be made to facilities and services at Brookvale Ski Park - upgrading cross-country and alpine ski facilities and extending operations from five to six days per week.

My Government is launching a new television advertising campaign in the New England market, specifically designed to increase shoulder season visitations.

This initiative, combined with a new approach to advertising which sees my Department of Tourism and Parks becoming a partner with private sector corporations, has the potential to substantially increase visitations to Prince Edward Island in the spring and fall.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government recognizes the importance of the fishing industry to the culture and economy of Prince Edward Island.

The men and women of this industry were responsible for a record landed value in 1987.

Both the industry and my Government are confident that our mussel and oyster fisheries will not only rebound from the crisis of late 1987, but once again grow and prosper. My Government will assist this sector in the promotion necessary to restore consumer confidence in its products. As well, new initiatives will be undertaken in quahaug culture, and the Aquaculture Development Program will be enhanced.

The hard work and dedication of our fishermen and processors to improve the quality of our groundfish production has paid off in the marketplace. While efforts will continue, particular emphasis will be placed on assisting the processing sector to improve quality control.

Assistance will be provided to increase value-added production in the industry, thereby enhancing employment opportunities.

New programs will be developed to assist our fishermen to diversify their operations in order to keep pace with technological advances and maintain a competative position within the Atlantic fishery.

Vigorous representation will be made in support of our fishermen securing fair and just access to the Atlantic fisheries resources and in defence of their right to adequate, secure and safe harbour facilities.

In order to ensure that the development of our fishery proceeds in an orderly, efficient manner, a *Prince Edward Island Fisheries Act* will be introduced during this session of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is aware that many diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disorders are often directly related to the lifestyles of those afflicted by them. My Government is designing and developing a health care system that is consistent with this awareness; a system that gives emphasis to the prevention of illness, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

My Minister of Health and Social Services has already taken action to encourage greater consultation with all individuals who serve the health care needs of Islanders. Through this dialogue and consultation, a health care plan will be devised that will provide a clear direction for the delivery of health care services on Prince Edward Island.

In co-operation with the Government of Canada and the governments of our sister Atlantic provinces, a study of the risk pattern of cardiovascular disease will be conducted over the next year.

In a further effort to promote health and prevent illness, the community component of the Reproductive Care Program will be expanded to include additional nursing and nutritional services.

In recognition of the importance of preventive dental care at an early age, the process of extending dental care services will continue. In 1986, dental care services were extended to adolescents aged fifteen and sixteen. Last year, thirteen and fourteen year olds were made eligible. This year, all children between the ages of three and sixteen will be eligible for coverage under the Children's Dental Care Program.

All Islanders are aware of the valuable contribution made by our aging population to our local communities and Province. My Government will provide more nursing positions in acute care hospitals as well as in extended care facilities. Community and home care support services will be enhanced and more emphasis will be given to the coordination of volunteers and voluntary services.

As well, adult protection legislation will be introduced to ensure the safety and protection of seniors and other adults requiring care or service.

Many Islanders are now dependent upon other provinces to meet their health care needs. In order to help reduce this dependence, provision will be made for new technological advancements within our own Province. In co-operation and consultation with the medical and hospital communities, my Government will endeavour to identify the necessary financial resources to operate a C.T. Scanner in this Province.

My Government will provide funding for a residential facilitiy for the mentally ill. This transition facility will provide a comprehensive rehabilitation program for young adults who are severely disabled by mental illness. The objective is to assist these individuals to adjust to community living after being discharged from acute care facilities.

Steps will also be taken so that the mentally handicapped may more fully participate in community, social and vocational activities.

My Government is aware of the burden caused by the high cost of drugs, especially for those Islanders on a fixed income. In the First Session of this Assembly, a Pharmacare Program was introduced for all senior citizens across the Province. However, there remain a number of Island families who are experiencing a great deal of financial pressure because of the costs related to the treatment of certain diseases and conditions. Therefore, a Drug Assistance Program will be introduced to aid those families who are faced with the high costs associated with the treatment of cystic fibrosis and growth hormone deficiency.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Our welfare assistance program must be redesigned in order to provide incentives and support for individuals striving for independence and a sense of security.

Over the past six months, the Social Assistance Evaluation Committee has undertaken a comprehensive examination of our social assistance programs and conducted hearings across the Province.

My Government looks forward to receiving the Committee's report this spring, and will be most interested in the recommendations concerning the removal of the disincentives which now prevent individuals from achieving freedom and independence.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

We must prepare and equip our children with the knowledge, skill, creativity and spirit they will need to meet the challenges of the next century.

If this effort is to be successful, Government must provide leadership and set clear goals and objectives for our education system.

Accordingly, my Government has recently made a substantive commitment to maintaining and improving the Prince Edward Island education system in a planned, systematic fashion.

Program development and planning activities within the Department of Education will be strengthened by the addition of necessary personnel and the development of formal curriculum guidelines.

Assistance will be provided to all school units to enable them to increase the level of special education, guidance and library services.

Because of the particular importance of language arts in the curriculum, a language arts consultant will be added to the Department of Education. As well, the creation of the new French Educational Services Division will allow the needs of the francophone population to be better served and will allow better coordination of French second language programs in our schools.

The Family Life Education program currently under development will be piloted in a number of schools beginning in the next school year. A Family Life Education Consultant within the Department of Education will be given the responsibility of coordinating the introduction of this important program and of ensuring that critical educational and community concerns are addressed.

Following the recommendation of the Science Council of Canada, my Minister of Education is exploring new curriculum initiatives in the area of science and technology which would use Prince Edward Island technologies and resources as the focus of instruction.

My Government will also be providing assistance to each high school in the Province for a new computer laboratory. The computers in these laboratories will be compatible with the type students will be using in post-secondary education or in the workplace after leaving school.

Additional capital maintenance funding will be provided to school boards in the 1988-89 school year. This funding will be directed to matters which require immediate attention such as roof repairs, window replacement, and major equipment maintenance.

My Government recognizes the importance of a high quality post-secondary education program to the future social and economic vitality of Prince Edward Island. Following the recent restructuring of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, particular attention will be paid to post-secondary education program development and to continuing the re-establishment of the base level of funding.

Increased resources will also be provided to the Provincial Library system to purchase new material to ensure residents of the Province have access to the information and cultural resources which they require. In addition, a complete catalogue of the holdings of the Provincial Library system will be made available to all public libraries.

My Government will also begin a Records Management Programme through the Public Archives. This will ensure the preservation of the important records of government and provide ready access to those documents for generations to come.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has made significant strides over the past year in encouraging business investment in Prince Edward Island. The level of interest being shown by Islanders and non-Islanders in establishing or expanding business enterprises in our Province is at an all-time high.

My Government is particularly proud of the success achieved by the Department of Industry under its Small Business Incentive Program and under the New Equity Investors Incentive Program at the Prince Edward Island Development Agency. The new Prospecting Division of the Agency has been extremely successful in identifying and attracting new investors and in establishing our Province as a visible and attractive location for business investment, both Canadian and foreign. The Agency intends to build on this record and to increase the level of activity in the coming year.

My Minister of Industry is aware that many new businesses require professional advice, research assistance and management training, especially during the first five years of their operation. Therefore, new businesses will be assisted by the establishment of a Small Business Research Program that will include management training and entrepreneurial development.

Furthermore, a computerization program will be implemented in the Department of Industry to facilitate communication and program applications across the Province. This enhanced capability will also greatly reinforce the business advisory services currently offered at the Regional Services Centres.

My Government has been pleased with the initial phase of development of the Prince Edward Island Food Technology Centre and the impressive number of food production projects under study. This year, my Government will be looking for the necessary support from the Government of Canada to allow the Centre to begin the second phase of development, that of acquiring the appropriate analytical and pilot plant facilities. As well, during this phase, staffing at the Centre will be expanded to include an active Food Science Section.

My Government has confidence in the ability of Island Co-operative and Credit Unions organizations to contribute to the development of our economy. A Co-operative Development Strategy for Prince Edward Island will be tabled in this session of the Legislative Assembly.

Assistance will be provided to those interested in starting Worker Co-operatives, thereby enabling them to invest in their own future. As well, the Equity Investment Incentive Program will be modified to ensure equal access for Co-operatives. In addition, a Co-operative Organizations Support Program will be introduced to help launch promotional and developmental initiatives leading to the creation of sustainable employment.

Through the Community Economic Development Program, financial support has been provided to many community sponsored enterprises throughout the Island. My Government plans to continue and expand upon this program.

While job creation is a priority across the entire Province, it is a more severe problem in the western and eastern ends. Therefore, the Community Economic Development Program will be expanded by providing additional assistance directed to the particular challenges in western and eastern Prince Edward Island.

My Government will plan, promote and initiate a major showcase of Island products during November of 1988. Entitled Showcase '88, this effort will enhance the reputation of Prince Edward Island products among local, national and international buyers.

In May of 1987, Prince Edward International Ltd. was established to pursue international development contract opportunities on behalf of Island firms. To date, twelve local businesses have agreed to be affiliates of Prince Edward International Ltd.

In the coming year, Prince Edward International Ltd. will be concentrating its efforts on opportunities available through the Canadian International Development Agency and in the fisheries, agriculture and education training sectors.

My Government is committed to a strategy to ensure the long-term future of Georgetown Shipyard. During the first phase of the strategy, the short-term future of the Yard has been secured by implementing the recommendations of an operations review. As well, direct financial support to the Yard has enabled it to obtain new shipbuilding contracts. These contracts have provided badly needed employment in the current year and will continue to provide stable employment for the next two years.

The second phase of the strategy will see the development of a more stable, long-term future for the company and its employees.

A committee will be established to prepare a long-term upgrading plan for the shipyard. This committee will include membership from the Georgetown Shipyard Board of Directors, the union and other interested parties. The plan will include a marketing strategy for the Yard and proposals for improving productivity, technological capability and overall competitiveness.

Mon gouvernement s'engage à créer de l'emploi pour les jeunes et continuera à offrir le programme Jobs For Youth au cours de l'année à venir. De plus, le réseau informatisé d'inscription pour obtenir de l'emploi reliera les ministères et les centres de services régionaux à une banque de données à partir de laquelle les candidats seront référés. Ce système leur permettra d'avoir accès égal aux postes disponibles.

Last year, my Government tabled a Science and Technology Strategy outlining an agenda for action. Since then, my Minister of Industry has taken steps to implement this strategy through the introduction of new programs. My Minister has also worked to promote awareness and to assist with technology acquisition through participation in a wide range of activities with such agencies as the National Research Council, the Ministery of State for Science and Technology, the Council of Science and Technology Ministers, the University of Prince Edward Island and the Food Technology Centre

Measures will be taken to implement other elements of the Science and Technology Strategy and will include the creation of an Advisory Council on Science and Technology and the establishment of a new Prince Edward Island Research and Innovation Centre.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government will continue to negotiate for a long-term, secure supply of electricity at a reasonable price. To complement this initiative, a program of electricity conservation and load management will be instituted.

As well, the Prince Edward Island / New Brunswick electricity cable will be upgraded to meet growing energy requirements, and the possibility of cable links to other provinces will be fully explored.

To maintain the competitive position of Island firms in the regional economy, high industrial electricity users will receive assistance through the provincially funded Manufacturing and Processing Electricity Industrial Rebate Program.

My Government remains committed to the promotion and further development of the biomass energy industry on Prince Edward Island. The promotion of biomass conversions will be encouraged and my Minister of Energy and Forestry will complete the development of an orderly wood supply system in Prince Edward Island.

In addition to promoting the use of biomass as an alternative to heating fuel, and as a means for electricity production, my Government is committed to reducing the dependence on imported crude oil. Programs will be designed to assist individuals, institutions and businesses in energy conservation and management.

The benefits that can be realized from the forests of this Province are rapidly becoming more evident. Therefore, my Minister of Energy and Forestry will substantially expand the Silviculture Program.

A new *Forest Management Act* will be introduced in the course of this legislative session for the consideration of all Members. The Act is consistent with both the twenty-year Forest Resource Development Plan and the Provincial Forest Policy.

The new legislation represents a commitment to renewing the forest to its full productive potential through co-operation with industry participants. In order to assist my Minister of Energy and Forestry in this endeavour, the Act will call for the creation of a Forest Improvement Advisory Council.

My Government is committed to the development of teaching materials and textbooks which are relevant to our Island culture and society. With this in mind, my Minister of Energy and Forestry, in co-operation with my Minister of Education, is working towards the development of material for Island schools which will address the energy concerns unique to Prince Edward Island and the tremendous potential of the wood biomass industry.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Over the past year, my Government has carried out a major review of cultural policy in an attempt to better identify and foster the heritage and artistic creativity which makes us distinct as an Island Province. The Provincial Arts Policy Task Force has been a central part of this policy review. The Task Force has consulted broadly with groups and individuals across the Province and Government looks forward to assessing its recommendations.

My Government has recently adopted a Provincial Multicultural Policy. Developed with considerable assistance from the Prince Edward Island Multicultural Council, this policy recognizes the cultural diversity of Prince Edward Island and affirms the intrinsic worth and continuing contribution of all Islanders regardless of race, religion, ethnic or linguistic origin.

In co-operation with the Federal Government, the Province has sponsored a study to determine the economic impact of culture in Prince Edward Island. The development opportunities identified in this study are now being assessed. It is anticipated that this research will become the basis for a federal/provincial agreement aimed at strengthening local cultural enterprise and assisting the further development of cultural tourism.

My Government has recently received, for consideration, a Heritage and Museums Policy which proposes the establishment of a Council to advise on heritage matters.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Planning by the Host Society for the 1991 Canada Winter Games is well underway.

In anticipation of Prince Edward Island hosting the Games, a Best Ever Program will be instituted. The purpose of this initiative is to fulfill the host province's responsibility to develop technical officials for the Games and to prepare our local teams and athletes to be as competitive as possible.

Last year, Prince Edward Island became the first and only Province in Canada to formally adopt a Provincial Conservation Strategy. A National Task Force on the Environment and the Economy has recently set a target date of 1992 for the adoption of national and provincial strategies, demonstrating that our Province is leading the nation in this regard.

To ensure co-operation with the Federal Government, a Memorandum of Understanding on Conservation and Development was signed by five provincial and five federal ministers in October. At the same time, a Canada / Prince Edward Island work-sharing arrangement on water resource management for economic development was signed. The first of its kind in Canada, it addresses problems of groundwater pollution, stream siltation and the uncontrolled growth of algae in our estuaries.

In the current year, my Government expects to conclude additional agreements with the Federal Government aimed at protecting our natural resources. A Canada / Prince Edward Island Accord on Soil and Water Conservation will provide support in our efforts to reduce erosion of Island soils, the foundation of our farming industry. In addition, a Canada / Prince Edward Island Sport Fisheries Agreement wil provide benefits both to Island anglers and the tourism industry.

Efforts to conserve our resources must be supported by a sound legislative base. In the past year, legislation has been enacted to deal with pollution from underground storage tanks, to prevent damage to streams and bays from construction activities, and to designate a system of scenic Heritage Roads that will preserve a unique feature of our rural landscape. In this session of the Legislative Assembly, my Government will introduce a new *Environmental Protection Act* and a new *Planning Act*. As well, a *Natural Areas Protection Act* is currently under consideration. This Act would safeguard the distinctive plant and animal communities that are such an important part of our natural heritage.

My Government recognizes the major role that volunteer groups play in preserving and enhancing our environment. Last year, ten groups received support for projects designed to improve the environment. In the current year, an Island Conservation Assistance Program will be introduced to provide funding to volunteer community groups who are carrying out activities to restore and improve our natural environment.

Public awareness is an essential part of the overall conservation strategy. Last year, my Government instituted annual Environmental Awards to recognize individuals and groups who have made a significant contribution to their communities. In addition, an Environmental Advisory Council, with Island-wide representation, was established to advise the Minister Responsible for the Environment. Further measures to increase public awareness will be developed during the current year.

Over the long-term, our best hope for implementing an effective conservation strategy lies with our young people. Therefore, a thorough review of environmental education in our schools is being undertaken, with a view to the development of a system of integrated resource education that is second to none.

My Government sees the Provincial Conservation Strategy as a challenge to wisely manage and use the renewable resources upon which our economy relies. With the co-operation of all Islanders, we can look forward to a future based on sustainable development and the wise stewardship of our natural resources.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Two comprehensive studies on the impact of rail line abandonment on the users of rail service and the highway system have been completed and are now being reviewed by my Government. The Provincial Government is now preparing to enter into negotiations with the Government of Canada to obtain the guarantee that Prince Edward Islanders will not be disadvantaged by the removal of rail services.

Over the next year, my Government will be working closely with the Government of Canada in the examination of all impacts of a proposed fixed link crossing. The Province will be an equal participant in a Representative Review Committee established to assess any proposal which may be submitted.

In the current year, approximately sixty kilometers of existing pavement will be strengthened in various locations across the Province. In addition, eighteen kilometers of new construction will be carried out on sections of the Arterial Road Network. As well, approximately thirty kilometers of asphalt surfacing will be completed in 1988.

During the past several years, school boards have used expenditure deferred methods in an attempt to balance budgets. This has meant foregoing capital maintenance, the result being that many schools now require major capital expenditures. My Government recognizes this serious problem and will take action to remedy it.

In the upcoming year, a new elementary school will be constructed in Tignish. As well, major renovations and, where deemed necessary, additions and extensions will be carried out at Birchwood, Queen Charlotte and East Wiltshire Junior High Schools, at Eliot River Elementary School, and at Tracadie Cross and St. Theresa's Consolidated Schools.

My Government, in co-operation with the Government of Canada, the City of Charlottetown, the University of Prince Edward Island and the Host Society, will provide for the construction of the facilities necessary for the staging of the 1991 Canada Winter Games. The total cost of these facilities will be over twelve million dollars.

A new building will be constructed in Montague to accommodate the Hospital and Health Services Commission and the School Unit IV Administrative Office. As well, a new tourist information centre will be constructed in Cavendish and the provincially-owned grain elevators will undergo major renovations and repairs. In addition, construction of the Young Offenders facilities at Georgetown and Tyne Valley will be completed.

Moreover, in the coming year, over one hundred new Family Housing or Senior Citizen units will be constructed across the Province. In some cases, these units will be provincially funded and managed; in other cases they will be federally funded, but managed by the Province; and the balance will be federally funded with management provided by non-profit organizations.

Together, these projects represent a major stimulus to the construction industry and will provide jobs for many Islanders over the next year.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government recognizes that all other provinces and the territories have a Criminal Injuries Compensation Program to assist victims of criminal activity. At present, however, no financial assistance is available to Islanders who are innocent victims of crime. To address and correct this unfair situation, a *Victims of Crime Act* will be introduced for the consideration of all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

My Government is aware that many spouses find it exceedingly difficult to collect money awarded to them by the Courts under the *Divorce Act* or provincial legislation. In this Session of the Assembly, a *Maintenance Enforcement Act* will be proposed. The new Act would ensure consistency in the enforcement of Orders and will clearly outline the powers of the court and of the judicial division in addressing this particular problem.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is aware of the valuable contribution made to our Island society by citizens of Acadian ancestry and is determined that their culture continue to prosper. My Government has recently adopted a policy which will better enable francophone residents to interact with Government in the French language. Using the new policy as a guide, steps will be taken to improve services to francophones and to preserve the unique Acadian culture.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has finalized the structure and mandate for the Women's Division within the Department of Labour, consistent with the report of the committee established for that purpose.

Since the last session of the Legislative Assembly, the *Pay Equity Act* has been carefully examined by a Committee of this Assembly. This Bill will once again be tabled for the consideration of all Members of the Assembly.

My Government recognizes that fairness and justice are necessary components of a strong and growing provincial economy.

To demonstrate its commitment to those ideals, my Government will introduce the following initiatives:

- an Early Retirement Program for Provincial Government employees between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five. This program will benefit those long-serving government employees who wish to retire early. It will also provide increased opportunities for advancement for younger members of the Civil Service and offer new job opportunities for those outside the public service of the Province.
- legislation that will guarantee political rights for the vast majority of government employees.
- legislation which will bring designated hospital employees and the non-instructional school board employees under the *Labour Act*.
- legislation which will afford non-unionized workers improved benefits and working conditions at their places of employment.
- a policy paper will be tabled on Pension Standards Legislation.
- the preparation of a *Civil Service Labour Relations Act* to deal with all matters related to collective bargaining, consultation, negotiation and arbitration.

As well, my Government is in the process of introducing an Employment Equity Program for the Physically Disabled. Through this program, special recruitment and placement efforts will be undertaken to ensure that more disabled persons hold permanent positions within government.

Moreover, through a joint initiative undertaken by the Minister Responsible for the Civil Service Commission and my Minister of Health and Social Services, individuals with disabilities will be offered training and on-the-job work experience. These efforts will enhance the individuals' potential to qualify for permanent employment.

A pilot rehabilitation program for government employees on long-term disability will also be initiated. The Civil Service Commission, working with the government's insurance carrier, will provide training, counselling, and job search assistance to help injured workers find suitable employment.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government believes in and promotes a strong Federal Government that is, at the same time, responsive to the needs of the regions and Provinces.

Consequently, my Government will build upon its relationship with the Federal Government to promote even more intensely the interests of Prince Edward Islanders. Areas to be pursued include an improved package of Economic and Regional Development Subsidiary Agreements, the operation of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency to ensure that it fulfills its promise, federal support for equalization and funding for government programs, assistance to primary producers in times of need and several energy and transportation issues.

In all of these areas, my Government will continue to promote the widest possible discussion of the concerns of Islanders and aim for solutions which are best suited to our particular needs.

In light of the 1987 Constitutional Accord, my Government believes that it is now in a more advantageous position than ever to deal with the other provincial governments and the Federal Government.

The proposed Constitutional amendments guarantee our Province juridical equality with the other provinces, and commits the Federal Government to consultations that will make our national institutions, as well as programs and services, more representative of the provinces.

Above all, the Accord completes the constitutional family so that the Constitution itself can become an instrument to promote the interests of individuals and groups, including minority cultural and language communities.

The Resolution to Authorize an Amendment to the Constitution of Canada will be introduced during this Session for your consideration.

My Government welcomes new challenges and opportunities in working with other governments, particularly through the Council of Maritime Premiers and its agencies and the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. My Government will develop its bilateral interests with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There are mutual benefits of pursuing joint action in a number of areas including education, economic development, transportation, trade, tourism promotion and technology exchange.

My Government seeks practical results for this Province from intergovernmental co-operation. It does so ever mindful of the fact that the region presents a stronger case when speaking with a united voice.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In addition to the measures already specified, you will be asked to consider a variety of legislative proposals, including:

- a *Registered Social Worker Act*;
- a *Physiotherapy Act*;
- an *Animal Health and Protection Act*;
- amendments to the *School Act*;
- amendments to the *Civil Service Act*;
- amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act*;
- amendments to the *Supreme Court Act*;
- amendments to the *Young Offenders (P.E.I.) Act*;
- amendments to the *Electric Power and Telephone Act*;
- amendments to the *Natural Products Marketing Act*;
- a *Judicial Review Procedure Act*; and
- the repeal of the *Agricultural Products Marketing Act*.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

You will be asked to appropriate the funds for the services and payments required by this Assembly.

The Public Accounts and the reports of the various departments and agencies of my Government for the year ending March 31st, 1987, will be tabled for your information. The Interim Report, forecasting Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1988, and estimation of revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning April 1st, 1988, will be presented for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

The Province and people of Prince Edward Island must continue to face and to effectively respond to the great challenges of the present and the future. My Government recognizes the need for strong leadership, and the requirement to assist all Prince Edward Islanders to grow and prosper during these times of challenge and change. Today, I have outlined programs and policies which my Government believes to be consistent with providing the leadership and the opportunities which Islanders require to grow and prosper.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.